

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 27 February 2017	Meeting Name: Audit, governance and standards committee
Report title:		Digital governance and engagement	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Director of Law and Democracy	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the audit, governance and standards committee:

1. Note the work and governance structure of the Digital Governance and Engagement Project Group.
2. Note the link between the Digital Governance and Engagement Project Group and the council's Digital Transformation Programme.
3. Note the identified work streams contained within the Digital Governance and Engagement Project.
4. Agree a review of the member training budget to ensure the council receives best value and efficiencies in the delivery of member training.
5. Note that Organisation Transformation will work with the group whips, Constitutional Team, Member Services and colleagues across the council to deliver an ongoing member development programme and induction following the 2018 elections which maximises digital technology to best meet the needs of members.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. On 14 September 2016 the audit, governance and standards committee received a report entitled 'Member Training Summary 2015-16'. The report reviewed the training undertaken by members for 2015-16, identified that work was currently underway to plan for member induction in 2018, and introduced the senior officer group who would be responsible for developing a training and development strategy for members that links to the 'Fit for the Future' agenda and the council's Digital Strategy.

Digital governance: progress to date

7. The council is embarking on an ambitious programme of modernisation. Our council plan priority is to be a council that is fit for the future with responsive, digitally enabled services that adapt well to change. In particular, we will be a leading digital borough, transforming how we serve and enhancing the lives of people in our community so that no one is left behind. This will all be backed by good governance and sound resource planning for today and in years to come. Having a strong digital offer in our democratic process is a key part of this priority work.

8. In anticipation of how we will modernise, officers instigated work on making our democratic and engagement processes more digitally focused, embracing the opportunities that come from social media and seeking to improve the efficiency and management of our decision making processes.
9. In June 2015 the Constitutional Team moved from the Chief Executive's department to Finance and Governance. In addition a number of senior management changes were implemented across the council. In autumn 2015 an officer review was instigated around our support to democratic processes with the aim of reducing bureaucracy by redesigning our processes to deliver more effective and efficient decision making. Entitled the 'Efficient Democracy Work' stream this delivered a number of changes to the constitution and also presented opportunities to refresh how the democratic processes within the council are supported.
10. Building on the initial work undertaken within the Chief Executive's department around stabilising management and processes, the move of the Constitutional Team to Finance and Governance provided the Director of Law and Democracy with an opportunity to review decision making processes and make recommendations to:
 - a) Improve the efficiency of our decision making processes
 - b) Rationalise the number of formal meetings
 - c) Review areas where there is duplication in functions across teams
 - d) Consider how the council can use the Digital Strategy to more effectively engage with the communities
 - e) Reduce the cost of the service and deliver on savings targets.
11. Work in this area has progressed and some key outcomes to date include:
 - a) Reduction in the number of council assembly meetings from 6 to 5
 - b) Combining the Leader or Cabinet Member Question Time events as an innovative way to engage with the wider public and give them the opportunity to hold the council's decision makers to account
 - c) Reducing the number of cabinet meetings to 8 per year
 - d) Merging standards committee and audit and governance committee.

Digital governance and engagement

12. Taking the principals of the Efficient Democracy Work, the Digital Governance and Engagement Project (DGEP) represents the next phase in reviewing our democratic processes. The aim being to see how we can use the implementation of the council's Digital Strategy to change the way in which the council and members engage with the community, partner agencies and key stakeholders. This includes through the use of social media as well as offering an open, transparent and proactive dialogue with communities in an attempt to engage more hard to reach groups through transforming the way the council conducts its business.

Digital governance and engagement project

13. The Digital Governance and Engagement Project is led by the Director of Law and Democracy. The scope of the group is to:
 - Review how the digital council can provide for member's diverse work life balance and support their mobile working needs
 - To draw together and develop the council's plans for digital governance and engagement
 - To develop the IT offer to members
 - To consider the requirement for officer capacity around digital working to support members
 - To prepare for integrating social media support into support for council meetings
 - To prepare for paperless council meetings.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Emerging work streams

Blackberry replacement to support mobile working

14. In December 2016 and following agreement of the new modernise and IT strategy in November, officers set out plans to replace all existing mobile telephones and replace and upgrade them with equipment that is more fit for the medium term future needs of the council; this includes phasing out of all current blackberry phones and replacing them with new phones.
15. For members carrying out their roles, embracing digital tools and processes can help them to support their residents, allowing them to pass on queries and tasks in real time, enhancing democratic engagement and accessing papers and agendas electronically.
16. All members will receive a new phone as part of this programme; this will include providing smart phones to councillors. In order to ensure that the planned rollout is delivered as smoothly and efficiently as possible, a number of officers and members will pilot the use of new phones and tablets. The purpose of the pilot, which progressed for councillors through January 2017, is to test the usage and usability of the new phones, iron out and resolve any technological issues, as well as give those councillors the opportunity to help inform how the wider rollout is best implemented. Evaluation and feedback from the pilot will take place through February and March 2017, with full rollout of new phones to all councillors taking place by the end of March 2017.
17. Southwark as a council has a clear strategy to use technology to improve our customers' experience to get services right first time. The aim is that by streamlining services and incorporating digital tools, customers will move away from traditional methods of contact to digital interactions by preference - known as 'digital by default'. Progress has been made around the access to services through our website, which help us to inspire confidence in our digital services for all of our

customers.

My Southwark for Members

18. As the established single account for accessing council services online, MySouthwark has proved popular with local residents. At the end of December 2016, there were over 105,000 account holders (currently rising by an average of 600 per week). This platform creates opportunities for Members to have an enhanced way of accessing information and supporting constituents with their cases. Members will be consulted on how MySouthwark could be of most use, such as submitting and tracking enquiries or accessing frequently needed council data or other online tasks.

Member training and development

19. Organisation Transformation has worked closely with Member Services and the Group Whips to support member induction and development. Working with the group offices, a training needs analysis was undertaken and deliver a tailored programme for the member groups which meets the individual's needs. Following the elections in 2014, it emerged that there were a number of members who are extremely digitally aware and who would actively seek to use digital channels to support them in carrying out their duties as a member. A number of these members have been part of the blackberry replacement programme pilot and work will follow with the roll out to make sure that members are supported in using the ModernGov app, Yammer and the annotation functionality which will allow members to make notes onscreen on meeting papers, and support the move to paperless meetings which will be piloted in Scrutiny. At the request of the Liberal Democrat Group, Communications and Organisation Transformation will be delivering a specialist workshop to assist members in using social media to engage with the community.

Member induction 2018

20. Southwark is aware that the move towards 'digital by default' is not only about IT technologies and hardware but also about developing a culture internally and externally that embraces digital as the norm. The technologies we roll out and our ability to access them as an organisation are addressed by the Modernise programme, which was agreed at cabinet on 1 November 2016 and is underpinned by a suite of action plans. The work described above will be one of the work streams in the workforce and IT action plans.
21. Officers across the council will work closely with Members to ensure that the move towards a digital approach. Organisation Transformation specifically will co-design the support programme for member induction, building on best practice and the established programme. The corporate learning and development offer for staff is currently being redesigned and re-commissioned, with a move towards e-enabled learning and promoting digital access. The learning from this will inform the design of the bespoke Members' induction in 2018. The intention is that Organisation Transformation will support members as required in moving toward the 'digital by default' approach which will create a template to be embedded into the Members' induction which will take place following the elections in 2018. Members will be able to access the core induction for topics such as council decision making, code of conduct, and an introduction to finance and resources through e-learning and video learning at a time that suits them, with supplementary workshops delivered by in-house experts as needed. Officers will review the operation of the member training budget to ensure that it is used to maximum effectiveness. Officers will continue to

review the operation of the member training budget with the group whips, Member Services and colleagues across the council to ensure that it is used to maximum effectiveness.

Live streaming for committees and other meetings

22. An important work stream of the DGEP is how social media can be used at our council meetings to engage with a wider audience and reach more hard to reach groups. The use of social media to bring democracy to our residents to hold the council to account is important for good governance and transparency. Social media has become central not only to the way we communicate or share ideas, as a broadcast channel, but more importantly to the way in which we interact, collaborate and network.
23. Currently there is no consistency across our range of council meetings in our approach to the use of social media; this is due to a lack of clarity, direction and resources. A schedule/explanation of the current position regarding social media at committee meetings is attached as Appendix 1. Through the DGEP we have an opportunity to provide greater clarity and direction which will assist in determining the resources required.
24. Currently the council does not live stream cabinet, council assembly or any of the council's meetings, however we audio record all council assembly meetings. Elements are then loaded onto the council website for residents to listen when required. Audio recordings of members' question time, public questions and questions on reports are uploaded on the council's website
25. SE1, in a private capacity, live audio streams and tweets cabinet and council assembly meetings.
26. Live video streaming of committee meetings could help the way the council interacts with residents as this provides residents immediate access to the meetings without having to leave the comfort of their homes. It encourages a greater number of people to get involved. Officers are exploring working with the voluntary sector to facilitate social media support to our meetings
27. Some local authorities introduced live streaming of council meetings following the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (initiated by former Communities Secretary Eric Pickles) to allow members of the public to film, photograph or make sound recordings of proceedings at public council meetings.
28. Overview and scrutiny committee meetings are currently filmed and are available to view online on the council website. The Leader and Cabinet Members' Public Question Time events in March and October 2016 were webcast live on the internet. As part of the future development of community councils and community engagement, there have been discussions on the live streaming of meetings whilst noting that meetings should be done in a cost effective way particularly at a time of diminishing resources.
29. There are cost implications in live streaming meetings and this needs to be balanced against the take up. In developing a strategy for social media at committee meetings, consultation will take place with members on the various options available and the resource implications for the council.

ModernGov

30. The modern.gov committee meetings management system has been at the forefront of providing an advanced and popular e-democracy system to local government for over 10 years. Southwark council has had the system since 2009.
31. Modern.gov offers many features for meeting management, including comprehensive database of forward plans, agendas, minutes, decisions and call-in. It creates and publishes to the web electronic agenda document packs and creates automatically generated web-based calendar of meetings.
32. In addition to the above, Modern.gov holds a comprehensive database of members' details that is displayed as a members' page on the intranet and internet. Data that can be held and displayed include photographs, surgery details, contact information, executive responsibilities, committee memberships, attendance at meetings records, register of interests and declaration at meetings.
33. Modern.gov also offers an app that can be used to ensure members have the latest meeting papers for the committees they are interested in. The app, which is already available to members and the public, is primarily aimed at members but is also available to anyone with an interest in having committee papers on their device. The app allows members to specify the committees of interest and will then automatically keep itself updated with all the latest meeting papers including the full agenda pack. The app allows users to highlight sections of the pack and make annotations just as you would with a paper copy. Information on how to access the app can be accessed via the council's website at <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

Reducing paper at council meetings

34. Council assembly at its meeting on 25 February 2015 agreed that the constitution be updated to allow the implementation of the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015. This had come into effect on 30 January 2015, enabling the use of electronic communications in the sending of summonses to members. Members may only receive summonses electronically, where they consent to them being transmitted by this method, and may at any time withdraw their consent.
35. Following this decision, the Constitutional Team emailed all councillors explaining the order and setting out its implications. This email also invited individual members to consent to receiving the summons (and open papers) by email. The summons consists of an email giving notification of a forthcoming meeting, which sets out the agenda titles with a web link to the reports. All open meeting agendas and reports can be accessed via the council's website.
36. There has been some take-up of electronic summons. At present:
 - 8 councillors receive all their summonses electronically (13%)
 - 2 councillors receive a mixture of electronic and paper summonses (3%)
 - 53 councillors receive paper copies only (84%).
37. The limitations of the council's current IT systems have made take up poor. Issues include Wi-Fi accessibility, technical issues, provision of tablets/'Bring Your Own

Device' scheme for members, initial equipment outlay, cost and additional staffing costs (if more staff needed for each meeting).

38. The constitutional team budget for printing costs is approximately £38,000 per year. If all members received electronic agenda papers, thereby reducing the need for paper agendas, the budget could be reduced by three quarters, which equate to a cost saving of about £28,500. It should be noted that under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, local authorities have to make available for the use of members of the public present at the meeting a reasonable number of copies of the agenda and reports for the meeting.
39. The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 stipulates that councillors have to give (and have the option of withdrawing) their consent to receiving electronic summonses only, this somewhat limits the measures officers can take to increase uptake. Following consideration of this report at audit, governance and standards committee, officers will be writing to members again to obtain their consent to receive summons electronically, ideally a 70% take up rate from members would assist in reducing costs. With the new mobile technology roll out, it is expected that take up should increase.
40. Participation could be increased by:
 - Provision of enabling IT offer that would encourage the use of electronic papers at meetings
 - Members who have used electronic summonses so far to give positive feedback and to become "paperless champions".

Policy implications

41. The council's Digital Strategy was approved by cabinet in February 2016. A Digital Transformation Programme has since been implemented by the Modernise division to deliver the objectives within the strategy and to compliment the other Modernise strategies for IT, Organisation Transformation, HR and Facilities. All key projects across the council that supports digital change are either managed or tracked within the Digital Transformation Programme. The recommendations and considerations within this report adhere closely to the Digital Strategy and match the type of digital changes being made to how officers carry out their work. Projects related to digital governance and engagement will be supported by officers who manage the Digital Transformation Programme.

Community impact statement

42. The proposals in this report aim being to see how we can use the implementation of the council's Digital Strategy to change the way in which the council and members engage with the community, partner agencies and key stakeholders. This includes through the use of social media as well as offering an open, transparent and proactive dialogue with communities in an attempt to engage more hard to reach groups through transforming the way the council conducts its business. Modernising our processes for engaging and consulting with the communities of Southwark will provide the council and members with alternative channels to reach hard to reach groups and those who are more digitally enabled.

Resource implications

43. The implementation of these proposals will be met from existing resources.

Legal implications

44. The specific legal implications relating to this report have been included in the report.

Financial implications

45. The financial implications of the proposals contained in this report will be met within existing budgets.

Consultation

46. The DGEP Group will, where required, ensure that consultation is undertaken with members and the Group Whips in implementing the proposals detailed in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None.		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Social media use in council meetings February 2017

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Doreen Forrester-Brown Director of Law and Democracy		
Report Author	Doreen Forrester-Brown Director of Law and Democracy		
Version	Final		
Dated	15 February 2017		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments sought	Comments Included
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		No	No
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			15 February 2017

APPENDIX 1

Social media use in council meetings February 2017

	Meeting	Social media use	Future considerations
1.	Council Assembly	SE1 website Tweets from @councilassembly (not Southwark Council created/maintained). Meeting is recorded, audio available from the council's website after the meeting.	Facebook notification of meetings (include creation of events that people can choose to be 'interested' in or confirm their attendance?) - would require curation. Official Tweets notifying the theme of the meeting, decisions made (if appropriate) - would require writing, curation. Webcasting meeting - would require equipment, hosting.
2.	Cabinet	SE1 website records and uploads sections of audio if relevant to them (not Southwark Council created/maintained).	Webcasting meeting - would require equipment, hosting.
3.	Better Placed Joint Committee	None.	
4.	Cabinet (Livesey Trust) Committee	None.	
5.	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Live webcasting of meeting, recording available online afterwards. Tweet with link to live stream posted. dlvr.it (an automated program that creates a tweet under specific circumstances) used to send out notifications of scheduled meeting and when agenda published.	
6.	Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Live webcasting of meeting, recording available online afterwards. Tweet with link to livestream posted. dlvr.it (an automated program that creates a tweet under specific circumstances) used to send out notifications of scheduled meeting and when agenda published.	

	Meeting	Social media use	Future considerations
7.	Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Live webcasting of meeting, recording available online afterwards. Tweet with link to live stream posted. dlvr.it (an automated program that creates a tweet under specific circumstances) used to send out notifications of scheduled meeting and when agenda published.	
8.	Place of Safety Joint Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Live webcasting of meeting, recording available online afterwards. Tweet with link to live stream posted. dlvr.it (an automated program that creates a tweet under specific circumstances) used to send out notifications of scheduled meeting and when agenda published.	
9.	Appointments Committee	None.	
10.	Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	None.	Public very rarely attend, no real use of social media
11.	Audit, Governance and Standards (Civic Awards) Sub-Committee	None.	Public very rarely attend, no real use of social media.
12.	Corporate Parenting Committee	None.	Public rarely attend
13.	Health and Wellbeing Board	None.	
14.	Licensing Committee	Public rarely attend. SE1 have attended on occasion and have tweeted – in relation to the licensing policy.	

	Meeting	Social media use	Future considerations
15.	Licensing Sub-Committees	Have had members of the public take photos and put on Facebook. Also SE1 have tweeted the outcomes of more high profile sub-committee decisions.	A large/contentious licensing application or review could generate a lot of media interest. Webcasting meeting could therefore be beneficial - would require equipment, hosting.
16.	Planning Committee	Public attendance can be high – SE1 reporter attends sometimes, tweets and sometimes audio records. Occasionally get people taking photographs. People in the public gallery might tweet/post on social media during the proceedings, we wouldn't really be aware if they were though.	A large/contentious planning application could generate a lot of media interest. Webcasting meeting could therefore be beneficial - would require equipment, hosting.
17.	Planning Sub-Committee A	None.	Planning officers may want to tweet upcoming planning applications being heard.
18.	Planning Sub-Committee B	None.	Planning officers may want to tweet upcoming planning applications being heard.
19.	Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Community Council	Done by Community Engagement Team for the Forum meetings (mention is made of the formal meetings): Facebook posts, tweets and email list. Live webcasting of meeting, recording available online afterwards.	
20.	Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council	As above.	
20.	Camberwell Community Council	As above.	
21.	Dulwich Community Council	As above.	
22.	Peckham and Nunhead Community Council	As above.	